

[R5929]

AT PEACE AMONGST YOURSELVES

WE HAVE all heard the proverb, "Diamond cut Diamond." All jewels are very hard as well as very pure. This hardness enhances their value. The Lord's people are all jewels—not only are they purified by the Lord's grace, but they have crystallized characters. This being true, as we have previously pointed out, there is more danger of cutting and scratching when they are together than there would be with materials less hard. Putty and clay do no cutting—neither do characters of putty-like quality.

Remembering this, the Lord's people should be very sympathetic with each other and very appreciative of each other. We learn to appreciate, as the Lord does, positiveness of character, strength of character, fixity of purpose, even though at times these qualities of character may cause some trouble. No wonder then that Berean Bible Classes have their difficulties sometimes, as well as do worldly organizations!

THE LORD'S PEOPLE NOT STRIFE-BREEDERS

Nevertheless, the Lord's people are to remember the special injunction of their Master that they should be peace-makers and not strife-breeders. It requires no great skill to stir up trouble. It requires considerable of meekness, gentleness, patience, and the other qualities of the Holy Spirit amongst the Lord's people to prevent strife, even with only the best of intentions prevailing. How much we all need to be on guard lest the Adversary tempt us, mislead us from the paths of peace!

It requires considerable experience and the wisdom that cometh from Above to enable us to judge rightly whether a matter of difference between others and ourselves is a question of principle, where some fundamental truth is at stake, or whether it is merely a question of opinion and preference without principle being involved. In the latter case, we should be willing to submit to practically anything for the sake of peace, whereas we could not do so where principles would be involved. However, the delusion is often presented to us that our preferences are always backed up by principles of truth and righteousness. We must learn from experience that this is a mistake, and must critically examine every such suggestion, asking the Lord's wisdom to enable us to see the difference between that which is merely our preference and those questions which involve principles and teachings of Divine origin.

For instance, in a Class there are often brethren or sisters who critically insist on a matter being done in a certain way, because that had been the previous custom or because they believe it to be the better way. They are ready to precipitate a quarrel unless their preference is followed. The wiser course is to waive our preference in favor of the preferences of others, if they are insistent, provided the right result is reached—namely, provided the will of the Class is really attained; for

the will of the Class is to be taken as the will of the Lord—or if not that, the Lord will overrule the matter and bring a lesson to us out of it for the Class.

Each and every member of a Class should earnestly strive to promote in a Class fruits of the Holy Spirit—meekness, gentleness, patience, brotherly-kindness, love, joy, peace. This promoting is to be done by remembering these qualities and exercising them ourselves, thus setting an example to others and showing forth the influence of the Holy Spirit operating in our own hearts and lives.

A FREQUENT MISTAKE

Too often the mistake is made of thinking that the whole weight of responsibility rests upon us—forgetting that our responsibility ends when we have exercised our judgment and have acted upon it.

Lack of faith in the Lord is closely associated with the error of bringing strife into a Class on some technical grounds. We should remember the Lord's interest in the Class and in all of His people, and that He is able and willing to overrule our experiences for good—likewise the experiences of others. If, therefore, matters are not going exactly to our pleasured in the Class, it will be better for us, and often for all, that we take the matter to the Lord in prayer, rather than that we should be continually nagging or fault-finding with that which is or which appears to be, satisfactory to the others, or at least to the majority of the Class.